

Baltimore and Ohio Railroad: Point of Rocks

HAER No. MD-14

Station

200 ft. S. of State Route 28, 0.5 mi. E. of U. S. 15

Point of Rocks

Frederick County

Maryland

HAER

MD

11 - PORO,

1 -

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Baltimore and Ohio Railroad: Point of Rocks Station

HAER No. MD-14

Location: 200 feet South of State Route 28, 0.5 miles East  
of U. S. 15  
Point of Rocks, Frederick County, Maryland

UTM: 18.281450.4349960  
Quad: Point of Rocks

Date of Construction: 1875

Builder/Designer: E. Francis Baldwin, B&O Architecture Department

Original Use: Passenger and freight station

Present Use: Maintenance away depot and commuter passenger  
station

Original Owner: Baltimore and Ohio Railroad

Present Owner: Baltimore and Ohio Railroad  
P.O. Box 6419, Terminal Tower  
Cleveland, Ohio 44101

Significance: The elaborate architecture of the Point of Rocks  
Railroad Station testifies to the significance of  
the railroad as the dominant institution in  
post-Civil War America, especially in small  
towns. Situated at the junction of the B & O's  
mainline to Baltimore and the branch to  
Washington, D. C., the station is one of the most  
picturesque railroad stations in America. Point  
of Rocks Station dates from 1871 and 1875 and its  
architectural style is categorized as  
Victorian-Gothic revival. The station probably  
was designed by E. Francis Baldwin, who served as  
architect for other B & O structures during this  
period. The building has been carefully  
maintained by the railroad and is a popular  
subject with model railroaders

Transmitted by: Jean Yearby, HAER, 1984.

Historically, the Point of Rocks Station is located on a significant site. In the 1830s, both the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal were constructing their respective routes west to the Ohio River. The railroad and the canal both chose a narrow strip of land between the Potomac River and the Catoctin Mountains from Point of Rocks westward. The conflict led to an involved suit in the Maryland Court of Appeals. The issue was resolved by allowing both the canal and the railroad to share the narrow strip of land. The station marks the juncture of the metropolitan branch of the B & O which follows the Potomac valley to Washington with the main branch which extends from Baltimore to the Ohio River at Wheeling, West Virginia, and later to St. Louis, Missouri, and Chicago, Illinois, in the midwest.

In the mid-1870s, the B & O chose E. Francis Baldwin of Baltimore as the head of the railroad's architectural department. He designed the B & O headquarters building in Baltimore and was most probably responsible for the Point of Rocks Station which was executed at the same time. Baldwin was one of the major 19th century architects practicing in Baltimore. His office worked directly for the B & O, the Roman Catholic Church, and, at the turn of the century, for the State of Maryland.

The proportion, detailing, and color of the Point of Rocks Railroad Station is unusually sophisticated for its rural setting and ranks with the most outstanding work of the Victorian Gothic Revival. The polychrome effect produced by the combination of brick, granite, and sandstone is reminiscent of earlier work in England by architects like William Butterfield.

Two publications of national scope have illustrated the Point of Rock Station. They are Edward Alexander's *Down at the Depot* (New York, 1970) and an article on the threat to railroad stations in the December 1971 issue of *Architectural Record*.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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B & O Railroad vs. C & O Canal. Chancery Records. Liber B144 folio 142. Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.

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